

Reservist returns POW/MIA bracelet

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — A reservist completed her pledge to keep the memory of a

Courtesy photo



Master Sgt. Sheila Couzins wore this POW/MIA bracelet in remembrance of Chief Master Sgt. Harold Mullins who was missing since June 1966. She returned the bracelet to Chief Mullins' family after his remains were buried in Arlington National Cemetery in November.

fallen Airman alive by returning the Vietnam warrior's POW/MIA bracelet to his family after he was finally laid to rest.

Master Sgt. Sheila Couzins purchased a red aluminum bracelet in 1985 outside the base exchange at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, while attending technical school.

The intelligence analyst chose the bracelet engraved with Chief Master Sgt. Harold Mullins' name because he was enlisted and he was from Denver, Colo. Similarly, Sergeant Couzins' father was enlisted in the Air Force

and had retired from Lowry Air Force Base, Colo.

Chief Mullins, a flight engineer assigned to the 4th Air Commando Squadron at Ubon Air Base, Thailand, was aboard an AC-47 Spooky gunship lost on an armed reconnaissance mission over Laos in June 1966.

"Wearing the bracelet started so many conversations. It represented that eventually everyone would be brought home again," Sergeant Couzins said.

Though the original bracelet broke nearly 10 years after Sergeant Couzins started wearing it, she continued to carry it in her flight gear. In 1994, her husband presented her with a silver replica, which she pledged to wear until Chief Mullins' remains had been identified and repatriated.

The wreckage of Chief Mullins' aircraft was discovered in 1994. Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory workers aided in identifying the remains recovered from the crash site. Eventually, all six members of the ill-fated AC-47 were identified. They were buried at Arlington National Cemetery Nov. 5, with full military honors.

Sergeant Couzins sent the bracelet to Chief Mullins' family upon learning that he had been found. Her eyes filled with tears, "I'm very glad I'm able to send it back to his family and that his family will have closure."

— Senior Airman Nicole Talbert
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

DOD launches 'America Supports You' to showcase support

WASHINGTON — Department of Defense officials launched a new program in November to showcase America's support for servicemembers and the numerous ways people are expressing that support.

"America Supports You" is designed to gather information about the activities and programs Americans have launched to show support and, most importantly, to ensure they and their families know about it, said Charles Abell, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terror-

ist attacks, Americans have come together as never before, united in their resolve against their terrorist enemies, Mr. Abell said. "And in the three years since ... the American people have stood solidly behind our military [troops] and their families."

But despite the outpouring of support, said Allison Barber, deputy assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, servicemembers are not always aware of it. The program will ensure servicemembers know about the many acts of gratitude, including activities conducted at the local level, said Ms. Barber, who runs the program.

"Sometimes the words 'thank you' just don't seem adequate when considering the tremendous sacrifices servicemembers are making for their country," said Edward Powell Jr., president and chief executive officer of the United Service Organizations. "But we're focused on the incredible power of 'thank you' — and we see this program as a way of expressing that to the men and women so deserving of it."

For more information, visit www.defendamerica.mil or www.americasupportsyoud.com.

— Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service